

CLERGIES

Protestation & Appeal.

Given in at

ABERDEEN. In 1694.

*Under Form of Instrument to the COMMITTEE of the late
General-Assembly, by the Ministers Delegate for that End,
from the Dioceses of Aberdeen, for themselves and in Name
of all their Adherents.*

Licensed according to Order.

WE the Ministers of the Diocess of *Aberdeen, Murray, Ross, Kanthnes, Orkney*, and the *Shire of Angus and Mernes* do hereby declare, that we cannot own the Assemblies of our Presbyterian Brethren, since the last Establishment to have been the full and sound Representatives of this National Church; And consequently that no Person or Persons whatsoever, by virtue of any Delegation from them, can justly claim a power to be Judges of our Lives and Doctrines, according to what we have exprest in the Queries given in to the Commissioner, the Tenor whereof is as follows.

I.

WHereas according to the Principles of Presbyterian Government, there ought to be no higher degree of Pastors in the Church than Presbyters, and all Presbyters are equal in Power and Authority: We desire to know by
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what Divine or Ecclesiastical Right these 50 or 60 Surveying Ministers, not being in actual Charge within this Kingdom, did take upon them the sole Exercise of the Ecclesiastical Power of this National Church; And have exerted a more absolute Authority and Jurisdiction over their Brethren, 900 or 1000 Ministers, who were in Office when Episcopacy was laid aside, than ever the Bishops pretended to, who never claimed a Power to make Acts concerning the Church, without consent of its Ministers.

II.

Since according to their own Principles, the power of Preaching the Gospel, and administering the Sacraments, and the power of Discipline and Government are inseparable in the Office of a Pastor: Queritur, If that Constitution of Church Government be lawful, which extends to the greatest part of the Pastors of the Church from having any share in the Government thereof.

III.

Being no Assembly of Church-Officers can justly claim any Authority or Jurisdiction over a Church, wherein that Church is not duly represented, and a Church cannot be represented in one Assembly in which their Delegates are not allow'd to sit; and that by the Constitution of this Church, General Assemblies do consist of Commissioners from all Presbyteries within the Kingdom. Queritur, How the late Presbyterian Assemblies can be owned for a lawful General-Assembly of this Church, seeing they consisted intirely of the Presbyterian Party; And the Presbyters of the Diocess and Shires anent, had no Commissioners present at these Assemblies, nor had they a call to send any.

IV. Since

IV.

Since by the Principles already mentioned, all Persons have one equal right to share in the Government of that Church, whereby they are Members and Office-bearers: And since the whole Body of the Pastors of this Church, who were in Office at the time of the Establishment of Episcopacy, cannot be charged with Ignorance, gross Error, Immorality of Life, or supine negligence in their Office: We cannot understand how the Constitution of the present Church-Government and late Assemblies can be justified, by the Presbyterian Ministers but upon Supposition, that the whole Body of Pastors are either no Ministers of the Gospel, or guilty of such Corruptions upon the account of their Principles and Practices, in relation to Church-Government, as that they are not worthy to be trusted with the Exercise of the power which belongs to the Pastoral Office, which we cannot own without either renouncing our Ministry, and declaring all the Acts of our Ministerial Function, void and null, or condemning these Principles and Practices which we judge to be just and lawful.

V.

Queritur, Whether the Annual Office of Ruling not Preaching Elders, chosen out amongst the People and join'd to the Ministers in *Kirk* Sessions; Presbyteries, Provincial and General Assemblies, and their Committees to assist and concur with them in the Exercise of Discipline and Government, can be warrantably affirmed to be of Divine Institution. And if any Foot-step of such one Office doth appear in the Practice of the ancient Church, or any plain convincing Proof of its Institution, can be produced out of the Scriptures; And if this Office be not of Divine Institution, whether a Judicatory consisting in point of such Officers, pretending to Divine Institution. And to act by Warrant and Commission from Jesus Christ be a lawful Judicatory.

To Which Queries we having received no satisfactory Answer, and in regard they have manifestly stated themselves as Parties against us, and those of our Character and Persuasion; Therefore for maintaining the Liberties of this National Church, and for many other Reasons moving us thereto, which we are resolved in due time to publish to the World, we find our selves unanimously obliged to testify against all Proceedings, Acts and Sentences, in the quality of an Ecclesiastick Judicator; and to Appeal to Their Majesties K. *William* and Q. *Mary*, as Supreme Judge under God within these Dominions, and to the next lawfully constitute and orderly called General-Assembly of this Church: And we do hereby protest against any Sentence past or to be past, against any of our number, that are cited or may be cited before this Committee, and do Appeal to Their Majesties as said is. And this we do not as if we would protect any that are truly Scandalous, (if any such be amongst us) nor as we would not give all due deference to this present Committee in submitting to them, if they cloathed themselves only with a Delegation from a Civil Power; but that we cannot until we be resolved in the anent Scruples, acknowledge any Ecclesiastical Power or Jurisdiction in this Committee, or their Constituents to be Judges of any of our Number. And finally we protest that this our Protestation and Appeal, together with the Queries anent as they were given in before the entering of this Protestation be insert verbatim in the Records of the Committee; *Ad futuram rei memoriam.*

Indorsed.

The Regular Clergies Protestation and Appeal from the Committee of the General-Assembly, 1694.